2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
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121 does not appear to play any part whatsoever in the integral system of the culture and bears no clear relationship to those other 'facts' which are integral to that culture? How did the Badaga millenarian movement of the 1860s, for instance, contribute to the integration of their culture?—the Badagas got the idea *that* a god was coming to them to consume the German missionary and perform the miracles of Jesus Christ. He did not come, the sick were not cured, and they were extremely dejected. Yet, important though it then seemed to Badagas, this cult movement neither perceptibly integrated their society nor as it happened disintegrated it; nor did it persist. What then was its function, and how do we explain the movement in structural-functional terms? In fact these and other aspects of cultural change during the period we are to examine cannot be adequately explained by reference to universal hypotheses about the working of society. Instead we must attempt to show how the local problems of the Badagas have given rise to local changes, local compromises, explanations and solutions, all of which have been worked out by the Badagas in their own terms of reference, to suit their special needs. Cultural changes have perhaps been induced by outsiders, but not introduced; the Badagas themselves were responsible for modifications in their way of life since their first contact with aliens.

Only when we have determined the nature of cultural change among Badagas and have essayed some explanation for it will we be ready to make any comparisons with the way other societies have operated and changed. We cannot and should not try to explain their specific case by introducing some extraneous model of society, be it structural-functional or evolutionary, and expecting it to fit the Badaga facts in such a way as to explain them. The present study is therefore a contribution to the ethnography and history of a well-known Indian region rather than an essay in comparative sociology.

• 619 The Badagas are clearly aware of how they differ from other communities in this region. Thus only people of their community have Badagu as their mother-tongue: only Badaga men and women wear the distinctive dress and carry a characteristic mark on the forehead: only Badagas live in their recognized villages which bear distinctively Badaga place-names: and only Badagas can marry Badaga women and thus belong in a widespread network of kin. As the community is a grouping where potential membership is the same as actual membership, no problem arises in practice

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over who is a Badaga and who is not.

The coherence of Badaga society was already a *fait accompli* by 1800, and we know of scarcely any villages founded much after that date. In effect their colonization of the Nilgiris and the consolidation of various refugee groups into a unity were events of what we must academically call prehistory. From the Badagas' point of view, however, the advent of a few foreign literati did not nudge their community from the darkness of prehistory into the gloomy light of historicity. Until today nobody, Badaga or otherwise, has published a history of the community: are they therefore still prehistoric?

Be that as it may, their past is of extreme importance to them, and is still vividly recalled in an oral history of legends that are taken for fact and in most cases probably *are* based on actual events. Badaga legends are highly consistent from one part of the district to another and are sufficiently precise about the more insignificant details to convince me that, like the Maori genealogists of old, Badagas have long maintained a fairly accurate interest in their past and in teaching the young about it. Some of these unwritten legends take the form of epic ballads that are sung throughout the night while waiting for someone to die and in other situations where time has to be killed. This should not deceive us into considering the legends mere entertainment: it is true that they are delightfully entertaining to Badagas, but legends are also crucial to their convictions about how the social system should operate. It is these highly credible tales about who settled which village that explain to all the 120,000 Badagas the regulations governing village exogamy and other aspects of the relation between a kinship system, a pattern of settlement and a social hierarchy.

Instead of relegating Badaga legend to the 'folklore' pigeon-hole in the hope that a content analysis will later be made of it, I propose to examine briefly what the legends do and do not cover in Badaga prehistory. Most of them are tales of supposed events, often mysterious, often tragic, events in the lives of personages who lived on the Nilgiri Hills. Stories of love and magic belong to this group. A second group are the political tales, legends of chieftains and East India Company officials who came to the hills for conquest, plunder or sport. A third group are the local legends of Badaga colonization. These three groups deal with varying aspects of Badaga origins. The tales of personal exploits, often amorous in

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Pandalu:ru village. This system thus parallels that of the Nilgiri Badagas but does not link up with theirs: cases cannot, for example, be referred to the paramount chief of the Badagas in Tu:ne:ri, and he does not invite Wainad Gaudas to his councils. The head of the all-Wainad council is someone noted for his justice, called the Great Headman (*doḍḍa gauda*); he is selected from any of the communes. Each commune is headed by a man termed the *jammaka:ra*, under whom there are two or three lesser headmen (*kudiare*). Both of these offices are inherited fraternally; i.e., they pass from brother to brother in order of seniority, then on to the eldest brother's eldest son, and so on. Each *kudiare* is responsible for the descendants from one particular Nilgiri division: in Kolepaḷḷi, for example, there are two such headmen because its population is descended from Todana:ḍu and Me:kuna:ḍu villagers. As in the hills, a legal dispute passes up this hierarchy from the *kudiare* to the Great Headman if necessary.

These Gaudas have maintained some marriage connexions with Nilgiri Gaudas, even with families of the gentry. Several communes still intermarry with the Nilgiri Badagas of So:lu:ru; but more generally all of the communes marry endogamously or exogamously within the Wainad community. Their constituent hamlets, being single lineages, are always exogamous.[26]

There is a nineteenth-century account of trading parties of Wainad Gaudas regularly visiting the Me:kuna:ḍu village of Ke:ti (and presumably elsewhere on the plateau), bringing with them buffaloes and gold dust 'for sale' (B.E.M.S., 1854, no. 14, 41).

These Gaudas had no connection with the Todas who, until the 1920s, lived on the edge of the Wainad, but some do maintain an exchange relationship with the Kotas there and also with certain Irulas and Kurumbas. The Kota partner from Gudalu:ru provides pottery as well as a pole used in Gauda funerals, to which he should also bring Kota musicians. He helps, too, with house building (Ranga, 1934, 26). In return he gets an occasional buffalo. Irulas and Kurumbas may also provide music for the funerals. Like the Panias they are valued as basket-makers but have no reputation for sorcery here as they do elsewhere. The Kurumba watchman institution is not encountered in the Wainad.

Gauda landowners have a special relationship with the Pania tribe, some of whom were their praedial slaves.[27] As if to justify this situation some Wainad natives claim the Panias originated as African slaves who escaped from two British ships in Calicut

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Table 3. *Occupations of the interviewed males, 1963*

		Rural Badagas	*All other Nilgiri rural communities*
I	Cultivating own or rented land	59.6%	30.7%
II	Agricultural labourer	5.0%	32.3%
III	Forestry and livestock	0.0%	7.4%
IV	Cottage industries	0.7%	5.8%
V	Manufacturing	3.7%	1.6%
VI	Construction	4.0%	2.6%
VII	Trade and business	0.3%	6.9%
VIII	Transport and communications	3.7%	4.2%
IX	Teaching and 'professions'	13.0%	5.3%
X	Non-workers, students	10.0%	3.2%
		(*n*=301)	(*n*=189)

178 184 182 619 [621]

The 1970s find an increasing number of young, college-educated Badagas settling in towns with their wives and taking well-paid jobs. These people still observe community endogamy, but in other respects their behaviour suggests that the distinctive identity of the Badaga community is nearing its end. It is no longer uncommon for urban Badagas to address rural Badagas in Tamil rather than their own language: ashamed of the state government's designation of their people as a 'Backward Class',[28] they are trying to merge with the South Indian city society and deny what they consider an 'uncivilized' parentage. Few such people regularly visit their native villages now. Once marriage with non-Badagas increases and becomes acceptable the palisade around their community will have fallen.

NOTES

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1. Even though there was no tax-farmer on the plateau to harrass them until 1807; Buchanan, 1807, vol. II, 247.

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2. Harkness, 1832, 138, note; Shortt & Ouchterlony, 1868, 17; Grigg, 1880, 455–456; Francis, 1908, 167; Price, 1908, 23; Hockings, 1973, 867. According to Metz, 1864, 5, Sullivan came to the Nilgiris 'at the solicitation of the hill-people themselves'. Sullivan, in a letter to the Board of Revenue in 1819, explained that 'the inhabitants are extremely anxious to have their lands measured, under an idea that they are paying more than they ought to do'; Grigg, 1880, 280. Another early influence on Badaga farming may have been the experimental farm for European crops operating at Ke:ti from 1830 to

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Catholic priests became very active—mainly in converting Protestant Badagas—and thereby split the Christians into two culturally similar but structurally opposed groups, each maintaining a self-righteous and antagonistic stance not only towards the other Christian Church but also towards all Hindus.[8] By 1924 there were about a thousand Protestants and a hundred Roman Catholics (Société des missions-étrangères, 1924, vol. III, 466).

Since around 1935 an American couple, Pastor and Mrs. E.D. Willmott, succeeded in converting a few dozen Badagas—again mainly from the Protestants—to the Seventh Day Adventist Church; today some two hundred Badagas are members. Otherwise there has been little change in the balance between Catholics and Protestants, who were almost equal in number by 1947. After national Independence, although Badagas continued to become Adventists, the conversion of Hindus to the two major Christian sects virtually ceased, as did most conversion of Protestants to Roman Catholicism. Some recent conversions were engineered by a Catholic priest (a European) who was able to provide imported clothing, houses, CARE food packets and some land to new converts.

A recent count found 2093 Badaga Christians, of all denominations (Moses, 1964, 35). While there are still points of disagreement between members of the two main sects (pre-eminently in ecclesiastical matters), as there are between Hindus and Christians in general, these are being obfuscated as other cultural orientations become more relevant to the changing living conditions. There are now indications in casual conversation that Badagas are adapting their orientations to a newly emerging pattern of social solidarity, one linking all Badagas, whether Christian or Hindu, in the face of competition with other Indians. Some Hindu Badagas, for instance, are willing to admit that the Christians set them a good example—an allusion to the standards of honesty, hard work, education, and 'progressive' treatment of their womenfolk that are admired in some Christians and that make them a westernizing model for other Badagas (Ranga, 1934, 5–6). The Badaga community is now usually called a caste, and its members are more strongly aware of their identity as Badagas, a group for which the state government shows particular concern and beneficence by treating as a 'Backward Class'.[9] Thus the chances of material betterment through wider employment opportunities which a century ago prompted a few Badagas to change their

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groups, called phratries. These are like subcastes, except that they have no form of occupational specialization and members are often permitted to marry outside their own phratry. In this hierarchy the conservative Wodeya group is at the highest level and the Toreyas, servants of the headmen, are the lowest. Between these two there are one phratry of vegetarians and five others of meat-eaters. The Christian Badagas, the first of whom was converted in 1858, belong to a separate meat-eating phratry which, although ranked below the lowest Hindu group, is respected for its progressive habits. Each of these phratries is made up of several clans which are exogamous, and every Badaga village belongs to one of these clans. There are no "multi-caste" villages. In effect this means that a man must marry a girl from another village, and she will come to live with his clan.

Although cross-cousin marriage is the norm, many of the Badaga rules of marriage differ from those which usually govern the South Indian Hindu. Most remarkably, marriage is allowed between members of clans which have a different ranking, and it is of little concern whether the man is of a lower or higher clan than his wife. A man may have more than one wife — in one case as many as five simultaneously. Divorce and remarriage are easy and quite acceptable in the community. Even widows can remarry without prejudice or criticism. It has recently become common for a dowry to be paid by the bride's family on her marriage; but the traditional custom is for the husband to pay bridewealth. This sum, nowadays 200 rupees, does not purchase the bride, but covers the ornaments she brings with her to the wedding.

Certain marital relationships are more favoured than others. Marriage for the Badagas is ideally between cross-cousins and a man should, if possible, marry either his father's sister's daughter or his mother's brother's daughter. But other relatives are permissible, provided they belong to the appropriate clan. A man may marry a girl far younger than himself, one of a different generation-level; and although throughout his life he can only belong to the generation he was born into, a woman changes hers according to her current husband's position. It is even possible for a man to marry a woman and her daughter (provided she is not *his* daughter) and her granddaughter. All three wives are then considered as belonging to the same generation.

An important feature of this community, from the point of view

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of a sociologist, is that—unlike most communities on the subcontinent—the Badagas can be categorized neither as tribe nor as caste. To be precise, they are refugees drawn from several castes in southern Mysore centuries ago, who then consolidated themselves into a community on the Nilgiri Massif and to some extent may have then emulated the social organization of the neighbouring Toda tribe (Hockings 1979a).

The very name *Badaga* means "northerner" in their language, and was clearly applied to them only after they had fled from the plains immediately to the north of the Nilgiris. The reason for this flight is made quite clear in their legends: in A.D. 1565 the Vijayanagar Empire was destroyed by Muslims invading from the north. The ancestral Badagas, fearing for the safety of their womenfolk, fled to the Nilgiris and adopted a tribal type of dress for both sexes. In 1603 a certain Father Finicio, the first European visitor, encountered them on this plateau. He described them (in Portuguese) as as Badegas, and gave the impression that they then numbered 500 to 1,000 people and inhabited no more than three villages (Finicio 1603). Already they had quite a varied mixed-farming economy. The most remarkable accomplishment of the Badagas has been the consummate success with which the community has adapted to and multiplied in surroundings that were initially wild and strange for them, and which lay at an elevation 3,000 to 5,000 feet higher than did their ancestral villages on the Mysore Plain. Their agricultural success has been partly due to their adoption of foreign techniques. Typically European crops are commonly grown today on terraces made with the help of machines. The fields are nourished with artificial fertilizers and the harvest is transported in lorries. These improved techniques have led to a better standard of living and a tendency for fathers to provide their sons with the education that they missed themselves. In the four main towns of the Massif there is now a sizeable Badaga middle class, and many of the men are doctors, lawyers, teachers, or government officials. Although still largely a rural people, speaking a distinct but unwritten Dravidian language, Badagas now have an unusually high rate of literacy in both Tamil and English.

Previous Studies

1.3. It is possible to show in considerable detail how the Badaga

128 The economic and social relations between these four communities were summarized diagrammatically by Zvelebil in the (perhaps over-simplified) way shown on p. 22.

The Badagas: Tribe or Caste?

121 In the numerous publications about the Nilgiri peoples there have been certain fashions in writing. One of these fashions was, during the 19th Century, to call the Badagas a "tribe", but during the 20th Century to call them a "caste". As a matter of fact, the two words "tribe" and "caste" have been used so loosely in India that it is better for an ethnographer to avoid them if at all possible. Many cases of Indian social groups which are undoubtedly tribes or undoubtedly castes could be listed; but what of the numerous cases of groups which seem to be "caste-like" tribes or "tribe-like" castes? If we are really dealing with a continuum in social typology, the distinction between tribe and caste in the case of the Badagas will not be an important one.

Let us nevertheless explore this topic a little. What do we mean by a "society", first? A society is the largest segment of a population in which the people recognize themselves as inhabiting a definable territory, and as engaging in meaningful, patterned interaction. Normally the society will be marked off from others by having a distinctive name and very often a distinctive language as well. In view of this definition and the complexity of Badaga interaction with other • 619 [121] Nilgiri peoples, it appears that the Badagas hardly constitute a distinct society by themselves. It is certainly true that there is a much higher per capita frequency or length of interaction taking place within the Badaga community (or within the Toda or the Kota community, for that matter) than across these community 648 boundaries. The social boundaries of each tribe are very recognizable disconti-

632 (615) When a festival has to be organized that only concerns perhaps one of the phratries resident in a "village", the relevant hamlets call together their own multi-hamlet committee to handle the matter without calling upon the "village" headman to organize the celebration. It is only for festivals that concern nearly all of the hamlets that he will take charge of the organization. No festivals are celebrated •619 796 jointly by a division, or by the whole Nilgiri population, largely because the distances to be traveled are too great and the number of participants would be unmanageably large. Funerals are always treated as public ceremonies, and weddings quite often are. 796 Other life-cycle ceremonies can be treated as public ones, but very (621) rarely are. In any case, when a life-cycle ceremony is treated as a public celebration, it is only celebrated in the hamlet of the people most closely concerned. Personal ceremonies are not celebrated at the "village" or any higher level. (This does not of course preclude inviting visitors from other "villagers" or divisions.)

623 (622) The headman does not make the arrangements for these various celebrations of his own accord. His hamlet generally has a council for settling disputes, and also a festival committee consisting of the priests and a few elderly men. The latter not only organize festivals, but occasionally may plan to build a new temple or propitiate an uncooperative deity. (Arrangements for life-cycle ceremonies, unlike public festivals, are mainly in the hands of the family concerned.) The elders on the hamlet council are generally different individuals than those on the (428) (562) festival committee; this is a convenient division of the labor involved. In most case the positions are quite often hereditary, and are never held by women. The (888) elders are typically the older males of all lineages represented in a hamlet; it is they who are in the best position to enforce council s among all of their

614 cases of vegetarian Adikaris marrying meat-eating Gaudas.
(582)

The word Adikari means "powerful man", and was once used as the title of a village headman appointed by some local prince. Whether any ruler was ever effectively in control of the Nilgiris before the advent of the British is uncertain; but Adikaris like to claim they were appointed as officials of a ruler who came up from Mysore.

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The Adikari hamlets probably have closer social cohesion than any of the other Badaga sibs (except for the two tiny phratries called Kumbaras and Bedas). This solidarity stems from the fact that Adikaris, alone among all the 17 sibs, hold an annual "reunion". Every November they go to the village of Nellitorai, on the Coimbatore Plain near Mettupalaiyam, to worship at the place where a Lingayat saint was drowned some centuries back. It was from this spot that the original five Adikaris are supposed to have started up into the Nilgiri Hills, after having journeyed to this place from northern Mysore (Metz 1864: 50-51). It is now obligatory for at least a few men from each Adikari hamlet to attend this function each year; and members of other Badaga sibs are welcome to take part in the worship if they choose.

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(619)

Despite this demonstration of Adikari solidarity, there have been several defections from the sib and its Lingayat values. There is one hamlet where Adikaris intermarried with Toreyas quite a few generations ago; and there they are always treated as Toreyas, although sometimes called Adikaris. In three other Gauda hamlets Adikaris have intermarried with meat-eating Gaudas. In both instances, these Adikaris are no longer vegetarians or Lingayats (Metz 1864: 50-51). In two hamlets there are vegetarian Adikaris who do not wear the lingam, but still retain the status of Adikaris. They are called Adikari, but are not considered to be

186 Christian group but also toward the Hindus (Périe 1932: 1-8).
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This situation continued with little change until after 1947, by which time the Catholics were almost as numerous as the Protestants. Independence brought new factors into play, however. Conversion of Hindus to either Christian sect virtually ceased with national Independence, as did most conversion of Protestants to Catholicism. While there are still some points of disagreement between members of the two churches (preëminently in ecclesiastical matters), as there are between Christians and Hindus, these are being obfuscated as other cultural orientations become more relevant to the changing conditions of life in the Nilgiris. There are now some indications in casual conversation that the cultural orientations of the Badagas are being adapted to a newly emerging pattern of social solidarity; one which links all Badagas, whether Christian or Hindu, in the face of competition with all other Indians. Some Hindu Badagas, for example, were willing to tell me that "The Christians set us a good example"; by these words they were alluding to the standards of honesty, hard work, education, and "progressive" treatment of their women for which the Christians are noted (cf. Ranga 1934: 5-6). The Badaga community is now always called a "caste", and its members are more strongly aware of their identity as "Badagas", a community which the Government shows particular concern and beneficence for by treating as a "Backward Class". The chances of material benefit through better employment opportunities which, a century ago, prompted a few Badagas to change their attitudes sufficiently to become Christians, now prompt their descendants to alter other orientations not closely related to religious values but rather to a government and its new classification of employment priorities. Such a change in orientation holds out the chance of upward mobility; but in that process conversion to Christianity is now an anachronistic mechanism.

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177 information about occupations and attitudes in urban centers of Madras State, either through seeing films or through talking with friends or relatives who actually work in towns, whether as "professional" men or as clerks.

177 178 691 During the present century Badagas have made much use of the official magistrate's court, and have not relied entirely on their own traditional councils. Several kinds of cultural change have contributed to this shift in emphasis: many men now know Badaga advocates or legal clerks, bus transportation to the court is quick and easy, since men stopped plowing and employed laborers their work-load has been lighter, and the profits from commercial farming often permit the villagers to engage in costly litigation.

178 (619) We have seen that, apart from a small number of marriages between Badagas and people in Mysore, Badaga social structure has altered very little during this century. The few Kanarese marriages have undoubtedly stretched the definition of where the boundaries of the various endogamous units should lie; but this has not so far resulted in a loss of Badaga "identity", or a strong trend toward more and easier marriage alliances with people in Mysore. Nevertheless, although these patterns of alliance have changed very little during the present century, there has been a profound impact from changing criteria in the arrangement of marriages. The demand for dowry as well as the traditional honnu ("bride-price") has marked a significant change in the attitudes of the wealthier and -- in their own view -- more progressive families. The practice of paying dowry is easily traceable to the lowland Tamilians and Kanarese; the ability to pay it stems from the new-found wealth of some Badagas; the need to pay it points to new criteria of prestige and an increased concern with establishing a daughter as a worthy and permanent member of an affluent family well able to take care of her.

178 583 (177)